

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF MINNESOTA

Kelly Vriezen,
*on behalf of herself and all others similarly
situated,*

Case No. 23-cv-267 (JWB/DJF)

Plaintiff,

ORDER

v.

Group Health Plan, Inc.,
d/b/a HealthPartners,

Defendant.

Kaye Lockrem et al.,
*on behalf of themselves and all others similarly
situated,*

Case No. 23-cv-461 (JWB/DJF)

Plaintiffs,

v.

Group Health Plan, Inc.,
d/b/a HealthPartners,

Defendant.

Sandra Tapp,
*on behalf of herself and all others similarly
situated,*

Case No. 23-cv-483 (JWB/DJF)

Plaintiff,

v.

Group Health Plan, Inc.,
d/b/a HealthPartners,

Defendant.

This matter is before the Court on Kelly Vriezen, Kaye Lockrem, Terri Cassick and Sandra Tapp's ("Plaintiffs") Joint Motion Unopposed by Defendant for Consolidation of Related Actions ("Motion to Consolidate") (ECF No. 21). Plaintiffs docketed the Motion to Consolidate in *Vriezen v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-267-JWB-DJF, seeking to join this action with *Lockrem et al. v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-461-JWB-DJF and *Tapp v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-483-JWB-DJF, pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 42(a). Having reviewed Plaintiffs' Complaints, the Court agrees that Plaintiffs' respective actions against Defendant challenge the same alleged misconduct and raise duplicative legal claims. Plaintiffs' actions involve "common questions of law and fact[,]" Fed. R. Civ. P. 42(a), and consolidation would "promote judicial efficiency as well as preventing unnecessary duplication of efforts and expense by the parties." *Adedipe v. U.S. Bank, Nat. Ass'n*, 13-cv-2687-JNE-JJK, 2014 WL 835174, at *2 (D. Minn. March 4, 2014), *report and recommendation adopted*, 2014 WL 835174, at *1 (D. Minn. March 4, 2014). Defendant does not oppose the Motion to Consolidate. The Court accordingly consolidates *Vriezen*, *Lockrem* and *Tapp*, and adopts the first-filed case, *Vriezen v. Group Health Partners, Inc.*, 23-cv-267-JWB-DJF, as the lead case in this matter.

Plaintiffs also request that the Court adjourn Defendant's responsive pleading deadlines until: (1) the Court appoints interim lead class counsel, as requested in Plaintiffs' Joint Motion Unopposed by Defendant to Appoint Interim Co-Lead Class Counsel Under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(g)(3) ("Unopposed Motion for Interim Co-Lead Class Counsel") (ECF No. 24); (2) Plaintiffs file a consolidated complaint; and (3) the Court establishes a responsive pleading schedule. The Court finds extending the responsive pleading deadline will facilitate a more efficient and orderly litigation process. The Court accordingly establishes a responsive pleading deadline thirty days from the date when Plaintiffs file their consolidated complaint.

ORDER

Based on the foregoing, and on all of the files, records, and proceedings herein, **IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:** Plaintiffs' Joint Motion Unopposed by Defendant for Consolidation of Related Actions (ECF No. [21]) is **GRANTED** as follows:

1. *Vriezen v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-267-JWB-DJF; *Lockrem et al. v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-461-JWB-DJF; and *Tapp v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-483-JWB-DJF, are consolidated for pretrial and trial proceedings.
2. To give full effect to this consolidation of related proceedings, the Court further orders that:
 - a. The first-filed case, *Vriezen v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-267-JWB-DJF, shall serve as the lead case of these consolidated matters;
 - b. All future filings for these related proceedings shall be filed in the lead case and shall bear the caption: *In re: Group Health Plan Litigation*;
 - c. All future filings in the lead case shall be considered filed in the relevant related case; filings should not be separately docketed in the related cases and all previous filings in the related cases need not be re-filed in the lead case;
 - d. The Clerk of Court is directed to add all parties and attorneys of record from the related cases to the lead case. All pro hac vice admissions in the related cases are valid for the lead case; and
 - e. The Clerk of Court is directed to administratively close case numbers *Lockrem et al. v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-461-JWB-DJF and *Tapp v. Group Health Plan, Inc.*, 23-cv-483-JWB-DJF.

3. Plaintiffs shall file a Consolidated Complaint within thirty (30) days after the District Judge enters an order on Plaintiffs' Joint Motion Unopposed by Defendant to Appoint Interim Co-Lead Class Counsel Under Fed. R. Civ. P. 23(g)(3) (ECF No. [24]).
4. Defendant shall answer or otherwise respond to Plaintiffs' Consolidated Complaint within thirty (30) days after it is filed.

Dated: March 29, 2023

s/ Dulce J. Foster

Dulce J. Foster

United States Magistrate Judge